



Part 4: Following Jesus's Way

John 8:2-12

Our salvation is embodied in the Way of Jesus.

I. Recovering an Ancient Paradigm: The Way of Jesus.

"I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." John 14:6

Jesus is both the Way into God's salvation, and Jesus is the Way our salvation is embodied in our lives. The earliest disciples were called people of "the Way" (Acts 9:2; 19:23; 22:4; 24:14).

"The Jesus way wedded to the Jesus truth brings about the Jesus life." –Eugene Peterson, *The Jesus Way*

Our Mission: Forming disciples who love Jesus and follow his Way.

II. The Way of Jesus.

A. The Way of Jesus keeps Jesus at the center as our teacher (John 8:2-6).

Many of us have been taught that Jesus is our Savior, some that he is also our Lord, but many have never been taught that Jesus is our teacher as well.

"Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life." *John 6:68*

Q: Who have been your teachers in the way to live life?
Who have been your teachers in what a good person is
or what the good life is?

As disciples of Jesus, we are his students and apprentices. Jesus is our ultimate teacher, and his words are the words that have ultimate authority and power in our lives.

As disciples we cultivate habits and practices around Jesus, his words and practices (see resources).

- B. The Way of Jesus rejects cultural identity markers for gospel identity (John 8:2-6).

Jesus rejects the identity markers of his culture because they miss the primary lens through which God sees people: people made in His image. . . having inherent value and loved by God.

Our culture is moving rapidly into tribalism around many cultural identity markers. . . left and right, conservative and liberal, rich and poor, religious and non-religious, gender, sexual orientation, etc.

Increasingly we are influenced to see ourselves and others through identity markers that are not grounded in the gospel of the Kingdom.

- C. The Way of Jesus sees people as loved by God and in need of God's salvation (John 8:7-11).

Jesus sees a woman in need of forgiveness and God's salvation like all people whether they are religious or not, spiritual or not, moral or not. . .

Example: "The Chosen: I am He" (Season 1, Episode 8) 46:05-49:14: Jesus and the Samaritan woman at the well. . . he has told her about Spirit and Truth, eliminating barriers. Jesus rejects both condemnation for her sin and affirmation of her sin. Jesus intends to love and liberate this woman from her sin rather than consign her to the penalty and bondage of her sin. There is a "third way."

- D. The Way of Jesus is motivated by God's love, guided by God's Word, and led by God's Spirit.

We never deny sin. We let Jesus and God's Word define sin. But we don't lead with sin. We lead with God's love and kindness and invite the person to come or return to Jesus.

"God's kindness leads to repentance." Romans 2:4

Word & Spirit

Because life with Jesus is relational, it is also experiential. We need God's Word as our anchor and guide in Truth, and we need the Holy Spirit for intimacy, power, and mission.

III. Light of the World (John 8:12).

"I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." John 8:12

"What we have is a pagan society whose public life is ruled by beliefs that are false. And because it's not a pre-Christian paganism, but a paganism born out of rejection of Christianity, it is far tougher and more resistant to the gospel than the pre-Christian paganism that foreign missionaries encountered in the past 200 years. Here without question is the most challenging mission frontier of our time." – Leslie Newbigin

"It was not Christian worship that attracted outsiders. It was Christians who attracted them." – Alan Kreider, *The Patient Ferment of the Early Church*

Discussion Questions:

1. Look at John 14:6 and Acts 9:2; 19:23; 22:4; 24:14. How do you see Luke using Jesus's metaphor of the "way" in Acts? How have you thought of the meaning of John 14:6 before? Does Luke's reporting in Acts add anything for you?
2. What do you think about Doug's main point: "Our salvation is to be embodied in the Way of Jesus"? What has been your experience in learning to follow "the Way of Jesus"?
3. What do you think about Greenwood's mission statement: "Forming disciples who love Jesus and follow his Way"? Do you think this is biblically faithful? What do you hope Greenwood might do to equip you to live as a disciple who loves Jesus and follows his Way?